

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A NARROW ESCAPE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DENIS DOWNE," "NO ALTERNATIVE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XIII. "IT'S ALL UPHILL WORK."

"AND so the gnome died, and his beautiful mortal wife was left free to love and to marry whom she would. But just as her freedom came to her, the one who had loved and been loved by her so long, looked behind him and saw and loved, and woo'd and wed, some fairer lady."

"What a horrible ending to a fairy story," Kate Mervyn says, discontentedly, as she brings to a conclusion the reading of the fairy tale with which she has beguiled the hour of halt on Countesbury-hill.

"The worst of it is the gnomes of real life never die, until the ones to whom their decease would bring freedom are past caring for it," her companion rejoins, with a sigh. "O, Kate! where do you get your contentedness and forgetfulness? That charming cousin of yours has not been gone a week yet, and you seem to have wiped him away from your memory; and Countesbury-hill doesn't tire you to death."

The last speaker is Mrs. Angerstein, who has moved herself and children to Lynmouth, and induced Kate Mervyn to be her guest for a week. Three days of the week have expired, as they sit now on steep Countesbury-hill. Odd as it may appear, the intimacy between the two women has received no check as yet, although they have been thrown entirely upon one another's society, without the alleviation of a third person's presence.

Nevertheless, though the intimacy has progressed favourably, they have not made any confidences to each other. Perhaps it

is for this very reason that they still regard each other well. Kate's silent battle with herself against her own judgment, tastes, heart, and tact—against her memories, against her sense of justice and of right—has been a bitterly sharp one. "This good is in it, whatso'er of ill," it has been "silent!" She has not made her plaint aloud, she has not worn her heart upon her sleeve, to be an annoyance to everybody about her. Indeed, she has so thoroughly thrown herself into the part which fate, circumstances, and Frank have forced upon her, that she is almost convinced that she is the cold and callous woman she pretends to be.

But though they have not made any confidences, Mrs. Angerstein has surmised, and implied, and insinuated a great number of things concerning the relations which may possibly exist between Kate and Frank. These surmises, implications, and insinuations have been met and parried gracefully and well. At the same time they have given Kate a good deal of pain which cannot be defined, and caused her to feel a vast amount of rage which may not be exhibited. The necessity for keeping this latter evil spirit quiet, is the cause of her having lapsed into the reading aloud of light literature, while they have been resting by the wayside before turning homewards this evening.

"Anything," Kate says to herself, "is better than being the target for those arrows of worded worder which she shoots at me as to my impassibility concerning Frank; when she tells me that I seem 'to have wiped him away from my memory,' I feel that I have indeed discovered an apparent eraser for all these blots of genuine feeling, but—they're

there still, and I feel them corroding my peace of mind."

Mrs. Angerstein's words come in trippingly at the end of these thoughts.

"The idea of your cousin being married soon is a nightmare to me; I can't shake it off."

"Nor can I," Kate says, "I shall have to get such a quantity of new things for the wedding; and everything is dear now, and everything white is dearer than all else. May—who is purity personified, will have this to answer for—she will make me a bankrupt."

"She will," Mrs. Angerstein says, concisely.

"Fancy going headlong to ruin for the sake of white silk and tulle," poor Kate says, with a struggle to be humorous that is very gallant, considering she is at the moment wincing under the influence of the vision she has conjured up, of the scene when that white silk and tulle will be worn.

"It's just as sensible a thing as going headlong to ruin for the sake of a man," Mrs. Angerstein responds, in a little burst of miserable retrospective feeling. "Come Kate! it will be ever so late before we get back to Lynmouth; besides, if we sit still any longer in this pure, free air, I shall be lured on to tell you something about myself that I would rather you didn't know."

"I'll promise not to try and lure you on to make any indiscreet confidences," Kate says, laughingly. "I am not very curious about peoples' pasts; I daresay your life has been a little more eventful than my own, for it has been a longer one."

The idle words, the careless unintentional allusion to her seniority, stabs Mrs. Angerstein sharply. It is in the nature of some women to love "gay youth" in their women friends, and still to feel outraged if the said friends betray anything like consciousness of the mere unassailable fact of being younger.

"As to my life having been longer than yours, that has nothing to do with it," Mrs. Angerstein says, a trifle testily; "long before I was your age, when I was quite young indeed, I had gone through such misery, and excitement, and despair, as was enough to make any girl prematurely old." Then she checks herself, fearing that she may let her story slip out of her own safe keeping, and still longing with woman's perversity to tell it.

But though she feels intuitively that Kate is not a girl to sit in the seat of the scornful, because she has been out of the way of temptation herself, though womanly instinct tells Mrs. Angerstein that this newly made friend of hers is the last person in the world to throw stones, Kate's power of preserving a confidence is not taxed this day. Some fine subtle feeling restrains the woman who is yearning for the full friendship that only full confidence can create, from opening her heart to Kate Mervyn. Mrs. Angerstein cannot define the feeling herself, but it shall be defined for her. It is the dread of rivalry existing between them in the future. She knows not about whom, since she is a married woman, and may not even ask herself the question. But though she clings to Kate's companionship in the present, her prophetic soul tells her that she will repent her for so doing in the future.

Suddenly (by what train of thought she has arrived at the junction of conjectures which induce her to speak so, it is impossible to determine) she says—

"May I ask if you have known Captain Bellairs long?"

"My cousins have known him a long time, I believe, and known him rather intimately too," Kate says, evasively, but when a woman is bent upon knowing from another woman, something of the man who is dear to one, and possibly may be dear to both, evasion is a very feeble weapon to employ.

"I said have you known him long?" Mrs. Angerstein repeats. "I don't know your cousins, therefore I'm not interested in them, or their friends; but I do know you, dear, don't I? and knowing you, of course I am interested in all that concerns you."

"Captain Bellairs does not concern me at all," Kate says, quietly, "he did while he was in danger, but Gertrude tells me he is nearly well again, and talking of leaving them 'just as they are getting accustomed to the unaccustomed position of having to think more of someone else than they do of themselves,' as she expresses it."

They are coming down the hill at a good pace as they converse in this way. The decline into Lynmouth is a steep one, the impetus grows stronger every moment, and they are walking almost too fast to talk, as Kate says this. But Mrs. Angerstein has no intention of allowing the pace to interfere with her pursuit of information.

"We shall get home before moonlight after all," she says, pulling up, and putting her hand on her side, "and I came out for the express purpose of going back into the village by moonlight; we haven't come down into Lynmouth by moonlight yet, any change is pleasant."

"You expect Mr. Angerstein, to-morrow, don't you?" Kate asks, and something in the question grates on Mrs. Angerstein.

"Yes, I expect him to-morrow, and I shall be very glad to see him; but I was speaking of the pleasantness of 'change,' Kate. I have been seeing him for seven years, he's part of my life; there is not much variety in the social intercourse between husband and wife."

Kate is silent, not because she dissents from anything that Mrs. Angerstein has said, but because she is pondering over the possibility of her ever finding it monotonous to hold daily intercourse with Frank. "No," she finally decides, "it wouldn't be monotonous; but it would be maddening to any nature less lymphatic than May's. I can only feel pain about losing him now. If we had married, it might be that I should feel pain about having gained him."

They are down in Lynmouth by this time, rounding the corner by the chief inn of the place, and, just at the moment they do so, a dog-cart is pulled up at the door. The driver of the dog-cart is about to descend leisurely, when he catches sight of the two ladies; then he jumps down, regardless of the way he jars his frame, which is weak and shaken still, and advances to meet the astonished pair, with the words—

"Cissy and Kate together! The pleasantest sight that has greeted my eyes for years." Captain Bellairs says this, coming to meet them with a glow of unpremeditated warmth and welcome upon him that quite takes the chill off their manner. He makes himself one of the party, assuming that they are intimate with each other, and ready to be intimate with him again, in a way that cannot be gainsaid.

Not that they desire to gainsay it; they are each so sadly glad that he has brought himself to the fore again. They are each so keenly anxious to find out how much the other knows about him.

"Is it accident or design that has brought him to meet her?" each woman asks this question of herself, and fails to answer it to herself satisfactorily. Each, for duty's sake, tries to hope it is by acci-

dent; and both are largely-enough endowed with fond, vain, womanly feeling to be very glad to think that it is by design. For one of them has suffered for him, and the other one is well aware that he has suffered greatly through her. One reason is almost as strong as the other in interesting them most keenly about him now.

"I left your aunt and cousins quite well this morning, Miss Mervyn," he says directly to Kate. "They would have charged me with kind messages to you, of course, only they didn't happen to know that I should see you so soon."

"Didn't you tell them, when you were coming?" Kate interrupts.

"I told them that, to be sure; but Lynmouth is not Dunster, you see. I should have been over to Dunster, in any event, in a day or two," he adds, in a lower voice; "for I have so much to tell you about the kindness I have received from each member of your family, that I feel I can't tell it to you soon enough."

All this while poor Mrs. Angerstein has been seething in silent wrath, under her mistaken sense of being neglected. She has grieved, wearied, troubled, infinitely distressed this man. For the very reason that she has done all these things, she feels that she is much nearer to him than Kate Mervyn can ever be; and that therefore Kate Mervyn has no manner of right to monopolise his first attention. It had been all very well for herto tell herself, when he was not here, that she wished Kate and Harry Bellairs could come together, and learn to love one another. Now that she sees them together, now that she hears him address Miss Mervyn as "Kate," she does not like the possible vista that opens before her. He is not a man to be unduly familiar. Therefore, his calling Kate by her Christian name is a certificate as to the fact of his having had a much fuller knowledge of her in days gone by than Miss Mervyn has ever admitted to Mrs. Angerstein.

"Won't you come home with us to supper, and tell Miss Mervyn something more about her aunt and cousins?" Mrs. Angerstein says. And Kate takes advantage of his acceptance of the invitation to say—

"Let me go on before you, Mrs. Angerstein, and cater for the unexpected guest. We are obliged to bring a good deal of mind to bear upon the matter of provisioning our little camp, Captain Bellairs, other-

wise we may find ourselves left alone in Lynmouth with half a lobster, and the knowledge that we can get nothing more until the market-women come down the following morning."

"I never manage so badly as that; after seven years of housekeeping that would be to put out signals of utter incapacity," Mrs. Angerstein explains rather touchily to Bellairs as Kate walks off. The truth is the poor woman is agitated by this rencontre. Her life stream has run along through such quiet pastures for many years, that now, when it seems to be widening, and rushing with a certain amount of velocity into wilder places, she begins to feel alarmed. In the first whirl of novel and excited feeling she is rather inclined to look back upon that peaceful past of hers as flat, tame, and unprofitable; rather inclined to forget for a brief space that she has been very happy and contented in it, although one day so closely resembled another that, at the end of the week, she had frequently found it difficult to distinguish between them. The shadow of an old romance is falling across her path again. This man by her side has been a hero to her from the day her father died, when in her desolation and shame she turned to him, and found him ready to give her a brother's love and a brother's protection. That another feeling than the fraternal one soon took possession of her heart, is a miserable fact that she never suffered any other human being to suspect—that she strove to conceal from herself—that she eventually strove to eradicate by marrying a man who knew all her story, and trusted her in spite of it. Now, as she meets Bellairs again, all her weak, wavering nature is shaken, all the peaceful plan of her married life seems marred. She feels almost guilty of treachery towards this true friend of hers, as she meets his steady, honest gaze, and knows that her own heart has known many a tumult of passion on his account. Bitter jealousy, of which she is heartily ashamed, flushes her cheeks, as he makes frank mention of Kate Mervyn and of his warm admiration. She is mean enough, she acknowledges to herself, to be ready to do anything to keep these two, who are so well suited to each other, apart. She shrinks, like the moral coward she is, from the prospect of witnessing the growth of an attachment on his side, which every law of reason and of right,

of nature and of circumstance, will justify. She shrinks almost as pitifully from the thought of telling him about her own marriage, and from offering him explanations of certain portions of her conduct which must have strongly resembled ingratitude in his eyes. Above all, she shrinks from the idea, that now Kate may learn the old story from the lips of Harry Bellairs, and possibly teach Harry Bellairs to stand apart from her for the rest of his life.

"It is such up-hill work, getting out of this stifling place, in any one direction," he says, looking around him, as they saunter slowly in the direction of her lodgings. "I wonder you don't prefer Lynton; it's fresher up there."

"It's all up-hill work, getting along in life, at all, I think," she answers, with quivering lips. "Oh, Harry, I did hope, when I left the home you put me in, and I married Mr. Angerstein, that there was an end of all trouble about me, as far as you were concerned. Now our paths have crossed again, and I have a presentiment that I shall be a source of distress to you."

"Fatigue has made you morbid," he says, kindly. "Come on and give me the supper you promised me, and show me your children, and introduce me to your husband."

"He is not here."

"Not here: I'm sorry for that," he says, with sudden gravity. For he feels that his former relations with these ladies precludes all possibility of intimacy with them, while the married one is unprotected by the presence of her husband. But his last words find no echo in Cissy's heart.

THE HANDEL FESTIVAL.

A FEW WORDS THEREABOUT BY A MUSICAL IGNORAMUS.

It has long been made a matter of reproach to you, and me, and all of us Great (and little) Britons, that we, nationally speaking, have no music in our souls, and, collectively considered, must be ranked with the Chinese, as being amongst the most unmusical of people. Individual exceptions, it is admitted, may exist, and here and there an Englishman may be found who so far differs from the mass of his unlucky fellow countrymen as to be gifted with the power of humming tunes in tune, and even of hearing half a symphony without being sent to sleep by it. Such exceptions are,

however, as rare as the black swan in the verse which has tormented many an Eton schoolboy; and the belief remains unshaken in many a foreign mind that Englishmen in general have no more ear for music than a lobster.

It is of small use to protest that we really are not quite so barbarously savage as certain of our foreign friends choose to consider us. One might as well attempt to reason with a crocodile as endeavour to convert a critic who is prejudiced. People, as a rule, pay little heed to facts, when they happen to be likely to upset pet faiths and theories. Else, if it were worth while to clear ourselves from being thought Ojibbeways in music, and only able to appreciate the thrumming of a banjo or the thumping of a tom-tom, we might point to our two operas, just now open well-nigh every evening in the week, and each of them attracting some two thousand nightly visitors. We might cite, moreover, countless concerts, whereof the notices not seldom fill two columns in the newspapers. At many of them, doubtless, much bad music may be heard; but at many of them none except the best is audible. To say nothing of the two great Philharmonic companies, the Crystal Palace concerts have an orchestra unrivalled, even on the Continent, and the music there performed is of the very highest excellence. Then we have our "Monday Pops," our delightful "Monday Pops," full of music as the pops of not-over-iced champagne corks. We have, too, both our vocal and orchestral amateurs; with a fiddle played by royal fingers in their midst; who discourse the sweetest music of the classicallest sort, and who practise till they make themselves nigh perfect in the art. Besides, we have our Tonic Sol-Fas, and a score more London choirs, that of the Sacred Harmonists in numbers standing first, who give all of them their leisure, and many of them their money likewise, in order to learn somewhat of the music they so love. Then passing out of London, we may note the yearly meetings of the three Cathedral choirs at Worcester, Hereford, or Gloucester; and the great three-yearly festivals of Birmingham and Norwich (which, it is hoped, may lead to those of Bradford, Sheffield, Liverpool, Glasgow, York, and Bristol, and other vocal places), where, in the sacred cause of charity, the best of sacred music is praiseworthy performed.

This brief imperfect list may suffice to

prove to sceptics, that music is in England not so utterly uncared for as they may choose to fancy. If further evidence be wanted, let them betake themselves to Sydenham to hear the Handel Festival, and to see the Handel Festival; for, unlike most music meetings, the sight of this is well-nigh as wondrous as the hearing; a blind man or a deaf one might equally find pleasure in it. Only to see the orchestra, to say nothing of the audience, is worth a journey from the Land's-End, or a jaunt from John O'Groats' House. Where else in the world can you behold an army of four hundred in the band, and a chorus of three thousand ranged tier on tier behind them? And where else in the world can you expect to find a gathering of so many thousand worshippers, assembled to do homage at the throne of mighty Handel? If seeing is believing, the sceptical may find in the sight of this great scene a satisfying proof of our musical proclivities.

Since the trial festival in 1857, which was but the rehearsal for the Handel Centenary in 1859, there have been four triennial repetitions of it. The present is the fifth of these every-third-year meetings, and there is good reason for hoping that it will succeed as well as those preceding it. Each festival has befittingly begun with the Messiah, and ended with the Israel: a selection from the other and lesser works of Handel making up the programme for the second day. The lesser works, however, include giants, such as Samson and Judas Macabæus, and have combined to form a concert quite as potent in attraction as the magnets afore-named.

O that Handel could have lived to hear a Handel Festival! I fancy him at work with his poor, jingling, little harpsichord, composing the Messiah, and I wonder if his genius foresaw the grand effects which the feeble notes he played then would in after-time produce. Before me lies a lithographed fac-simile of the score just as he left it. It forms a thickish volume, and though written with rapidity, as the frequent smears and smudges abundantly attest, it is so distinct and clear, and free from puzzling erasures and interlineations, that Sir Michael Costa might conduct from it as easily, well nigh, as from the printed score. It is moreover to be noticed that the words are written legibly, at length, without abbreviation, as though to leave no chance for fault in fitting every syllable

to its own proper note. They who hold that Handel was inspired when composing the Messiah, may certainly find reason for so thinking, in the speed wherewith he wrote. On the first page of the manuscript is put, "22 August," and at the bottom of the last is written, "Fine de l'oratorio. G. F. Handel. Septembr. 12, 1741." Another memorable date is that of "Septembr. 6," which is noted at the end of the Hallelujah chorus. I can imagine the composer, content with his day's work, after finishing this mighty strain. I fancy I can see him, sternly smiling to himself, while jotting down the date, as one well worthy of remembrance, being the birthday of the most immortal of his songs.

Glass being a non-conductor, it is hardly to be wondered at that the Crystal Palace should be accused by learned critics of acoustical defects. A concert room that covers nigh a quarter of an acre may easily admit of errors in construction, which might be avoided in one of less expanse. These drawbacks have, however, been so efficiently remedied, that they but little now impair the effect of the performance, at least to those who happen to sit in a good place. People who complain that they cannot hear the solos, are probably too stingy to pay for the best seats. But even if they miss the gentler beauties of the festival, they will not fail to get full hearing of the grandeur of the choruses, which nowhere have been sung with more magnificent effect.

Thank goodness, I am not a critic by profession, and I have no need to spoil my pleasure at a concert by keeping my ears always upon tiptoe, as it were, for shortcomings and mistakes. There are people in the world who lose all pleasure in a puppet-show just because they will persist in looking for the wires; and there are others, of like nature, who can't enjoy good music, because they strain their powers of hearing to discover faulty notes. Of musical slang I know no more than of the mystical inscriptions on old china. Such terms, for instance, as ground bass, chromatic intervals, the coda, or the dominant, convey no meaning to my mind, and serve merely to confuse it. Yet, though a thorough ignoramus, I flatter myself, somehow, that I have an ear for music, though which of my two ears it is I should be puzzled to determine. "I love a simple song that awakes emotions strong," and I likewise have a relish for a symphony by Beethoven.

I don't pretend to comprehend it as it should be comprehended, but I understand enough of it to derive abundant pleasure, and profit too, from hearing it.

Handel's style, however, is more simple than Beethoven's, and it needs but little knowledge of good music to delight in him. There are sermons in his tones that speak straight to the heart, and make one feel the better for them. To hear a work like the Messiah is a religious education. Sublime as are its strains, their simplicity is such that a child may learn to love them. The stately sweep of each great chorus is astounding in its grandeur, and so vast is their variety that the ear is never wearied by them. Every air seems Heaven-inspired by the words for which it was written. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," has such a mighty emphasis laid upon the "know" that it would well-nigh serve to convert an unbeliever. I have heard it fifty times, yet even now, it thrills me with wondrous awe and reverence at each hearing.

Although I am by no means a musical enthusiast, I often feel inclined, while listening to Handel, to fall upon my knees and be thankful for his teaching. Ignoramus as I am, I think I understand the meaning of his music. When hearing it I fancy that it carries strong conviction of the faith that has inspired it. To my mind it is no rhapsody to say that the Messiah may be accepted as an evidence of the truth of Christianity. None but a true religion could beget such noble music.

They who think in this way must be certainly well-wishers to the Handel Festival. Without quoting the stale saying about song-making and law-making, it may surely be admitted that the giving of good music is a gift of priceless worth to the well-being of a nation, and all festivals encouraging the love and study of good music should be fostered for the reason that they do the state good service. We are not so savagely unmusical in England as certain of our clever neighbours may pretend to fancy; but there is assuredly abundance of bad music heard among us, and the only way to neutralise the ill effect of this is to spread as much as possible the taste for what is better. In this great needful work of musical improvement, let Handel be our help. Sublime as are the glorious effects which he produces, Handel's music is plain-speak-

ing, and needs no scientific or scholastic explanation. The more we study Handel, the more we learn to love him; and the more he is made popular, the better for the people.

LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

WARWICKSHIRE. THE TRADITIONS OF SHAKESPEARE IN HIS OWN NEIGHBOURHOOD.

IF Shakespeare had left reams of letters, or what would be still more delightful, an autobiography, full of allusions to his local friends and gossips, his hayfields, his orchard and his garden, Stratford-on-Avon, would long ago have become, what it is in a degree now, the Mecca of all intellectual Europe. We regard, even now, with almost idolatry, the dim room of the humble old-timbered house in Henley-street, where he was born; but if we had been told by himself where he first saw Anne Hathaway, where he shot the deer, where he oftenest sat and mused, where he wrote his first sonnet, where the first fire of ambition lit up within him, how we should all love the lanes and fields of Stratford, and how many pilgrims would visit them to track the footsteps of the great demi-god of English poetry!

Yet, after all, true lovers of Shakespeare, like Mr. Wise, have in fact collected far more local traditions about the poet than are generally known; and it will be our pleasant province in this article to summarise them and comment on them, for they have all their special value and a certain local charm which seems to bring us in nearer and more friendly personal relationship to the poet.

What we really know of Shakespeare is confined to four or five indisputable facts, and from these his biographers have built up his wondrous life, as Professor Owen did the dodo, from one bone of the bird. What do we know, then? We know that he was the son of a glover of Stratford, and that he was born in April, 1564. John, his father, was probably the son of a well-to-do farmer at Snitterfield, and was high bailiff of Stratford, in 1568, four years after William's birth. In 1582 Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, a maiden older than himself, of Shottery, a village near Stratford. How he spent his youth at Stratford no one can divine. Some say as a lawyer; others, as a butcher; others, as a glover. Whether he fled to London to avoid prosecution

for deer stealing in Charlecote Park is, also, unproven; but, in 1589, we find him a sharer in the profits of the Black Friars Theatre, and this fact was proved by Mr. Collier's discovery of a petition, signed by him and his colleagues, among the archives of the Earl of Ellesmere. He retired from the stage, probably with a sufficiency, between 1604 and 1607 returned to his native town, and died at New Place, in April, 1616. He had three children, Hamnet, Susanna, and Judith; of these, Hamnet, the son, died young; and, we also know that, as early as 1597, he was rich enough to purchase New Place, one of the best houses in Stratford, with two barns and two gardens.

The London traditions of Shakespeare are few, and the facts recorded about him as an actor or a manager still fewer. We know he was at first envied and maligned by his contemporaries as a "shake-scene," and Jack-of-all-trades; and we gather from Ben Jonson and others that he excelled as kings and old men, and a story is preserved of how he condescended, when a stage monarch, to pick up Queen Elizabeth's glove, which she had dropped, and to return it without derogation by using an impromptu line of blank verse. We know also that he lived in Black Friars, befriended Ben Jonson by acting in his plays, and dedicated his first poems to the young Earl of Southampton.

But it is at Stratford that, through Mr. Wise and Mr. Halliwell, we must search for the more special local traditions, and gather up glimpses of his real life, when he retired to the country a man of means, and wrote steadily his two plays a year. At forty-one he came home to meditate and plan, to dream and create; and by the Avon and under the oaks of Charlecote we know he must have thought out the sorrows of King Lear and the fairy dream of *A Midsummer's Night*. The influence of that calm and happy scenery undoubtedly pervades his works.

The old house in Henley-street, where the poet was born, is an old timbered building, the walls squared out with beams, and distinguished by its high-pitched gable roof and dormer windows. It was rented by Shakespeare's father in 1552, and purchased by him for forty pounds in 1575. It consisted then of two messuages, two gardens, and two orchards. In 1597, his father, who went down in the world after giving up his glove business, sold a small

portion of the land for two pounds. The antiquaries who sketch the Stratford of 1546 suppose Henley-street, at that time, to have been lined with old timbered and gabled houses, with unenclosed land, where Clopton-lane now runs. The gentry and richer tradesmen lived in the High-street, with larger houses, which had courtyards, galleries, carved barge-boards, and broad, square latticed windows, below which the rustic Romeo could stand in the moonlight, and from which the rustic Jessica could elope. The Falcon Inn stood, tradition says, where it now does, and opposite it was the great house of the Cloptons, hereafter to be partly rebuilt for Shakespeare himself. Lower down in High-street, below some timbered almshouses, stood the house of the priests of the guild, and there was just a glimpse of the church of the Trinity, says Mr. Wise, with its lead-coated spire, and full in sight the Rother-street cross and the market cross; while in Bridge-street stood the ale-houses of the poet's time—the Crown, the Bear, and the Swan, where Bardolph may have reddened his formidable nose, and Nym have dropped in for a supplementary tankard.

From the infant muling in its nurse's arms, the poet passed as the unwilling school-boy to the grammar-school which still stands in the main street, a long low building with the school-rooms on the upper story. Twenty years ago, says Mr. Wise, the old stone staircase, roofed over with tile, up which Shakespeare must often have skipped, was standing. The relics of modern show places are as incredible as those of the monks. They show here a huge desk at which the young poet is supposed to have sat, and many Stratford people believe in it.

Here Shakespeare learnt little Latin and less Greek, but at least heard scraps of Homer and Plutarch, had visions of Greek and Trojan heroes, which expanded afterwards into his Troilus and Cressida, his Julius Caesar, and his Anthony and Cleopatra. Underneath the school-room is the old hall of the Stratford Guild, where, as a boy, he was taken to see the players, and there his imagination was first fired by the mimic scene; adjoining the grammar school is the chapel of the guild. In restoring this chapel in 1804 some curious frescoes were found representing the Resurrection, the Day of Judgment, St. George and the Dragon, and the Death of Beckett. By right of New Place Shake-

spere had a pew here. New Place, the spot where Shakespeare spent so many divine hours of meditation, was pulled down by that clerical barbarian Gastrell out of spite and to avoid taxes, and the same savage cut down Shakespeare's mulberry tree. New Place was a fair house of brick and timber; according to Dugdale, built by Sir Hugh Clopton in Henry the Seventh's reign. During the civil war Queen Henrietta Maria kept court here for three weeks. On a part of the garden, appropriately enough, stands the Stratford Theatre. The old houses in Stratford were nearly all swept away by great fires, but one still remains in the High-street with carved barge boards, ornamented corbels, and the date 1576. The college, says Mr. Wise, and the house in Chapel-lane, sold by Getley to Shakespeare, have long been destroyed.

"The very streets speak to us of him," says a local antiquary of research. In *Timon of Athens*, for instance (act iv. scene 3), occur the following lines:—

It is the pasture lards the brother's sides,
The want that makes him lean.

The meaning of which was a complete riddle to all commentators. The late Mr. Singer very happily proposed "rother's sides," that is, oxen's, obviously the true reading. And at Stratford to this day is there a street still called Rother-street, and formerly the Rother-market, that is, the market for cattle, which is still held there. Again, there is Sheep-street, which is invariably pronounced Ship-street by the lower orders. And this pronunciation we find in Shakespeare. Thus, in the *Comedy of Errors* (Act iv., Scene 1), Antipholus of Ephesus says to Dromio of Syracuse—

How now, a madman? Why, thou peevish sheep,
What ship of Epidamnus stays for me?

Again, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Act i., Scene 1), Speed thus laments—

Twenty to one he is shipped already,
And I have played the sheep in losing him.

And Shakespeare, in one of his poems, actually rhymes the word "sheep" as if it were spelled "ship."

The chamberlain's accounts of Stratford, ransacked by Mr. Wise, have rendered up some curious facts, which seem to show that home poverty, and not the killing of the Charlecote deer, were the real causes that brought the poet to London at the age of nineteen. In 1563-4 the corporation was in debt to John Shakespeare. The same year a list of donations, as Mr. Halliwell shows, proves that Shakespeare's father

gave as much as any other burgess of the town to the relief of the poor who were stricken by the plague. In 1569 he was chief magistrate of Stratford. In 1575 he bought the house he occupied in Henley-street. Three years afterwards the ex-glover, wool-merchant, and well-to-do burgess, from some cause or other, had become reduced. In 1578 John Shakespeare and another alderman are exempted, from poverty, from paying the full levy of six-and-eightpence for equipping "three pike-men, two billmen, and an archer." The same year he is excused from paying for the relief of the poor, and the next year he is a defaulter for three shillings and threepence towards armour for the levy. The blow must have been heavy, for the same year he mortgaged his estate of Ashtree, near Wilmechote, brought him by his wife. In 1579, the next year, he sells the interest of his property at Snitterfield. Things go on ill up to 1586; for he ceases to attend halls and is removed from his post of alderman. A little later he is included among a list of recusants who stay away from church for fear of being arrested. Without doubt the sere and yellow leaf had set in, and honour, love, obedience, troops of friends, the old man could not look to have. It is these moments that make men timorous, and such the boy poet must have seen and felt as the neglected lad at Stratford, as the poor actor and adapter in London. May not some Warwickshire Jew have been the type of Shylock?

Was it then to shelter and succour this old father that the boy came to London and worked for the stage? Our instinct tells us it must have been. For, in 1596, as the commentators have shown, the old father applies to the Herald Office for a grant of arms. His son (then thirty-two) in London, at the Black Friars, was a poet, a shareholder, and a successful dramatic author. The old house is looking up again. We must assert our old gentleness. The next year, 1597, the successful author buys New Place, one of the best houses in the town; a little later he returns a gentleman of renown to Stratford. In 1601, three years before that return to Elysium, the old man had died.

Whether Shakespeare spent his early youth at Stratford as a lawyer's clerk, with his quill-pens and his quiddities, or as a Glover, composing twistable phrases about Cheveril

gloves, or as a doctor, "culling simples," we shall never know; but, whatever it was, he made a fair use of it, and worked out several important secrets of human nature. No doubt his instinct soon drove him to help the strolling companies, and play pages and lovers; and one thing is all but certain—some summer night, for a frolic, he joined Mercutio, Poins, Pistol, and Nym, to kill a deer in Charlecote or Fullbrook Park; and because Sir Thomas Lucy was eager to fine and imprison him, he lampooned the old Shallow, and made him the laughing-stock of the whole countryside. There, in Lucy's Park, he must have met with Jacques, moralising under a huge, grey, stunted beech, as the greasy herd swept past the wounded deer, careless and selfish as the vulgar world; and there, perhaps, he met, gay in red and yellow, the fool in the forest, a motley fool, who asked the time, drew a dial from his poke, and moralised. The way to Charlecote lies over the bridge that crosses the Avon. In April time great orange marigolds fringe the river, and gild the soft, still flood, and the osier twigs in the eyots seem tipped with living silver. The path follows the river lovingly. What a spot to wait for Rosalind! Here, where the primroses glow among the violets and the shy flowers sprinkle out on the blackthorn, gentle Master Fenton perhaps wooed Anne Page, and, with sweet, maiden modesty Mistress Anne told her lover to seek her father's love—

Still seek it, sir,
If opportunity and humblest suit,
Cannot attain it, why then—Hark you hither.
(They converse apart.)

Up such a spring path, where the cuckoo repeats his one idea, we reach the little village of Alveston, and push on till the tall, grand elms of Charlecote rise before us, elms under whose shade the poet and his fellows, perhaps, shouted, "What shall he have who kills the deer?" Or that other jovial song, "Under the greenwood tree who loves to lie with me, and tune his merry throat unto the wild bird's note." Here Shakespeare had been out with the harriers, and seen poor wat, far off upon a hill, stand on his hinder legs and listen, as presently the hounds ceased their clamorous cry till they had singled—

With much ado the cold fault clearly out,
Then opened they their mouths, echo replies,
As if another chase were in the skies.

Yonder, through the elms, are the red gables and blue turret-cupolas of Shal-

low's house, with the three twisted luses carved over the porch, were we near enough to see, and the Avon wanders through the park at its own sweet will. At the new church of Charlecote you will find old Squire Lucy's grave and armoured effigy flat on its worshipful back, waiting, like a patient sentry, for the end of time.

By Hatton Rock, where the wood slopes down to the Avon, Shakespeare must often have wandered with his children to fill their laps with orchises and woodruff, cuckoo meat, violets, and all the treasures of the spring; for here the nightingale sings in the shade at mid-day, and the river flows by with oxlip leaves and hawthorn blossom sprinkled on its bosom.

By Welcombe, too, the poet must have often trod—when winter candied over the brooks, or when spring painted the meadows with delight, for, as we have seen, his father had property at Snitterfield, a little further on. Here, says Mr. Wise, in the Welcombe grounds, and near the "Dingles," still stand some gnarled and bristling old thorn-trees; probably the only trees round Stratford contemporary with the poet, now the "one-elm" boundary-tree, on the Birmingham road, has been destroyed. In 1614, an attempt was made to enclose these open lands, and Shakespeare and the Stratford corporation successfully opposed the usurpation. These fields are full of the local flowers which Ophelia is represented as playing with in the ghastly thoughtlessness of her insanity; the rank crow-flowers (buttercups), long purples, and dead men's fingers (the arum); and here, too, in the dingles, when April comes round, cluster the daisies pied and ladies' smocks, all silver bright, and pansies "that's for remembrance." The Ardens (the family of the poet's mother—oh! how little we know of her!) held property here. Beyond Snitterfield are "the Bushes," where the daffodil, that "comes before the swallow dares," waves its golden bells. But there is no tradition of where the house of Shakespeare's father stood; and we can trace the poet only by "the violets between the dappled hazel stems."

Sweeter than the lids of Juno's eye
Or Cytherea's breath.

Near the farm-house here, on the ridge of hills which roll on to Welcombe, there is a fine view of the whole of Shakespeare's county, with the Avon wavering out its

silver ribbon. In the distance are the "heaven-kissing Cotswolds," where Shallow ran his greyhounds, and, very far beyond, the two peaks of Malvern. Yonder is Wimpote, where Shakespeare's mother lived, and where his father held the farm of Ashbies; and Shottery, where the young poet conversed with sweet Mistress Anne. From here the path to Stratford leads down a hill, by the side of hedges full of wild pear and apple trees—a special feature of Warwickshire. In Lower Clopton, the old gateway still remains of Clopton House, where John Coombes's daughter was once mistress—John Coombes, Shakespeare's friend—and near where Clopton-lane joins the main road, used to stand the "one elm."

All local antiquaries agree that if about the house at Stratford there may be disputes, there can be none about Ann Hathaway's cottage at Shottery. In a little valley at the far end of Shottery, a mere cluster of farm-houses and cottages and gardens, the house of fair mistress Anne stands close to a brook. It is a long old timbered house, with the dark beams showing against the plaster, the thatch bossed with sponges of close green moss. There is a garden and an orchard, and here among the flowers moved Anne herself, "the fairest flower," the type of Imogene, and Rosalind, of Juliet, of Jessica. We need scarcely remind our readers that we have no record of the sorrow or joy of Shakespeare's married life; but, from many passages in his poems, we must conclude it to have been full of peaceful happiness. The old slander that he left his wife only his second best bed, is only repeated by those who forget that she was already provided for by her dowry, and we know for certain that she expressed a deep and longing wish to be buried with him in his grave.

The notion that Shakespeare is as mysterious as the builder of the pyramids, has disappeared. In Stratford, there is so much in every village and field to remind us that, after all, the poet was a Warwickshire man, and wrote like one who loved his county and neighbourhood as much as Sir Walter loved Liddesdale.

In King Henry the Fourth, Davy toadies Justice Shallow to countenance William Visor of Wincot against Clement Perkes of the Hill, a cherry-orchard farm still so-called, while Wincot is the place where Christopher Sly ran fourteen pence in debt with Marian Hacket for "Shire ale;"

and the joke practised on Sly is said to have been played by one of Sir Aston Cokaine's family on a wandering tribe. Burton Heath, where Christopher was born, is a small village twelve miles from Stratford, and is also mentioned in Henry the Fourth. The names of many of the minor characters in Shakespeare's plays are to be found in the corporation books of Stratford, says Mr. Wise, treating most pleasantly and cleverly on this subject, and there we find such familiar names as Bardolf, Fluellin, Peto, Sly, Page, Ford, &c.

The Weir Brake, a pretty wood, which covers the high banks of the Avon, tradition says, was the scene of his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and there is another tradition that at the old moated manor house (now a farm-house) at Radbrook, three miles off, there was a large library where Shakespeare used to retire to study. About Stoneysford there are many sluggish pools full of yellow flag flowers and thickets of rushes, where Ophelia may have been found dead.

At Luddington church Shakespeare is supposed to have married Anne Hathaway; but both church and register have disappeared. At Welford there was a terrible flood in 1588, which, Mr. Wise thinks, is alluded to in Shakespeare's early play of *Midsummer Night's Dream*—

The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
The crows are fatted with the murrain flock.

It was then that a farmer's daughter of Hilborough was floated down the river on a haycock. John Perry's wife was so frightened she did not know her own child, and as the old tract says, half a hundred pounds of hay was swept off from Weston Vicarage.

But talking of Stratford traditions, we must not forget Shakespeare's crab-tree.

"In the days of Queen Bess," says Mr. F. C. Green, its chronicler, "the village of Bidford, on the banks of the Warwickshire Avon, was noted for the illustrious bands called 'Topers' and 'Sippers.' The 'Topers' were the stouter of the two, and boldly challenged all England to contest with them in imbibing the nut-brown ale, for which Bidford especially was famous. Early one Whit-Monday morning William Shakespeare and a few of his right merry boon companions, who had accepted the Topers' challenge, started for Bidford, and, arriving there, had the mortification to find that the challengers had that very morning gone to Evesham fair on a similar

errand; at this disappointment they resolved to take up with the Sippers, who had remained at home, and whom they held in contempt. Upon trial, however, the Stratfordians found themselves unequal to the contest, and were obliged to retire whilst they still retained the partial use of their legs. The poet and his comrades had not retreated more than a mile from the famous hostelry of the Falcon—at which their capabilities had been tested, ere they lay down and bivouacked for the night, under the wide-spreading boughs of a thickly-blossomed crab-tree.

"Upon waking in the morning Shakespeare's companions endeavoured to persuade him to renew the contest; but, probably foreseeing a second defeat, and knowing that 'discretion is the better part of valour,' he declined, and looking round and pointing to the villages from which his adversaries had assembled, uttered the following epigram—

Piping Pebworth, dancing Marston,
Haunted Hilboro, hungry Grafton,
Dodging Exhall, papist Wixford,
Beggary Broom, and drunken Bidford.

Which appellations the villages still retain, and ever after the tree was known far and near by the name of Shakespeare's 'crab-tree.' Uncomplimentary as the designations undoubtedly are to some of these localities, it would be considered almost a species of blasphemy to doubt that Shakespeare was the author of them, so much do the inhabitants delight in the titles bestowed upon their abodes."

The tree perished from decay in 1824.

Marston is still, says Mr. Wise, famous for its dancing. It was here Charles the Second took refuge as a turnspit, and was beaten with a basting-ladle by the kitchen wench to prevent the suspicions of the Puritan soldiers. Bidford is still famous for its toping, but the once jovial Falcon Inn has been turned into a workhouse; Broom is still beggarly, and Wixford still belongs to a Roman Catholic family.

Hilborough is no longer haunted, indeed there is nothing there but a lonely old manor with a round pigeon-house. "Dodging Exhall" is still an out-of-the-way place that seems to hide itself among the lanes, and is specially hard to find. Grafton (where some Knight Templars once lived) is still hungry, from its barren soil.

Shakespeare loved his county and the home in which, after the storms

of early life, he found a haven and a mooring-place. That Shakespeare loved England, we know from his beautiful apostrophe—"This precious stone set in a silver sea;" that he loved his parents we feel sure, or he could not have painted the love of Cordelia for her weak father; that he loved children we are sure, from his Mamillius in the *Winter's Tale*, whom Polixenes calls—

My mirth, my matter,
Now my sworn friend, and then my enemy,
My parasite, my soldier, statesman, all.

That he had loved deeply, every sentence of *Romeo and Juliet* tells us; that he loved his wife, we gather from the intensity of wedded love that forms the central thought of *Cymbeline*. The love of one's nation begins in the love of one's birthplace. The provincialisms in Shakespeare are very numerous, and show how deep in the poet's blood the Warwickshire elements were ingrained. A few instances may be interesting. "A mankind witch" (*Winter's Tale*) is still a favourite Warwickshire expression for a violent woman. "Deck," for a hand of cards (Henry the Fourth) is commonly used in mid-England. Pistol calls Nym (in Henry the Fifth) "a prick-eared cur,"—still used at Stratford for an upstart person. "Blood-boltered" (*Macbeth*) is Warwickshire for blood-clotted. "It ascends me into the brain," Falstaff (in Henry the Fourth) says, warmly, of good sherris sack. This is pure Warwickshire. Again, in *Timon of Athens*—

Lord Timon will be left a naked gull
Which flashes now a phoenix.

Shakespeare uses the word gull in the Warwickshire sense of an unfledged nestling. In *Titus Andronicus* the poet mentions clover by the pretty provincial appellation, of "honey-stalks." "Dap the door" (*Hamlet*) is still used about Stratford for "do up or open." To "sag" in doubt (*Macbeth*), is also a Warwickshire phrase.

Such are a few of the numerous traces of local lore to be found in Shakespeare's poems, and they serve to show that, while immersed in stage properties in Southwark, or drilling actors for some court pageant, where men like Raleigh and Bacon were to be listeners, the Warwickshire poet did not forget the tall spire above the embowered Avon and the solemn old elms that guarded the gates of Charlecote. While he strove to reach the "horse-

shoe" fount and the blue peak that pierces Heaven, the poet's worldly ambition was simply to till his own acres at Stratford, and to become an esquire of means and position in the town where he had been once slighted as the son of an impoverished man.

STRANDED.

"THERE is a tide in the affairs of men,"
Said one whose lips were touch'd with living fire,
"Which leads to fortune." It is true, but then
Each life has tide-marks whence the waves retire.
We take the waters as they rise, and float
Hope for a guide, across a sunny sea;
Each dancing wave that rocks our little boat,
Brings nearer to the port where we could be.
Some gain the haven that their spirits crave,
The tide may ebb, but they abide secure;
While some are stranded by the highest wave,
On barren beach, with bleeding wounds past cure.
The tide ebbs out that bore them to their fate,
And leaves them wounded, lone, and desolate.

I have been stranded thus; my boat set out,
Freighted with hope and love, to cross life's sea:
But waves have wash'd my precious cargo out,
And winds have shatter'd both my boat and me.
I had not skill enough to guide the boat,
I had not strength enough to use the oar;
So all my treasures on the water float,
And I am stranded on a barren shore.
I cannot lay the blame on wind or wave,
I might have journeyed safe with thought and care,
But I have lost the hope that made me brave,
Foregone the love grown holy as a prayer.
The tide ebbs out, and leaves me to my fate,
Weary and wounded, lone and desolate.

MIDSUMMER IN LONDON A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

"BUGGS, be they ever so intolerable, are effectually destroyed by Mary Bridger. As some of late have taken upon them the name of successor, with intent to defraud her of her business, she takes this opportunity of acquainting the nobility, gentry," &c., &c. We need not give the end of the advertisement; it is more curious to know that in London, a century ago, the charge made by these artists depended on the shape and size of the bedsteads operated on—stump, five shillings: turn-up stump, six shillings; plain half-tester, seven shillings and sixpence; turn-up half-tester, ten shillings and sixpence; plain four-post, ten shillings and sixpence; ditto, lath bottom, fifteen shillings; raised tester, twenty-one shillings. What excited the ire of Mary Bridger was the following advertisement:—"Buggs, be they ever so numerous, are effectually destroyed by Thomas Jeffries, only surviving son-in-law and successor to Mr. George Bridger, Bugg Destroyer to His Majesty. I engage to keep such beds as I have cured, free from Buggs, at one-and-sixpence per

bed yearly." There was still another rival; for Andrew Cooke, residing near the Pottage Pot on Holborn Hill, announced that he had cured fifteen thousand bedsteads "with great applause" in twenty years, the "buggs not returning for a number of years." But, oh this wicked world!—"Beware of malicious people, who envy me of my bread, and set up for themselves."

The advertisers in those days, while as clever as our own in puffing off their wares, were perhaps more solicitous about a name or reputation that was worth something in the market. Mrs. Phillips, who made and sold perfumes in Orange Court, Leicester Fields, stated that, "some people in the business have given out that the real Mrs. Phillips was long since dead, and that they were her successors; it is entirely false and without foundation—the original Mrs. Phillips still lives in Orange Court." Dressmakers' prices are illustrated by an advertisement from Conduit Street—"White sarsanet cloaks for fifteen shillings upwards; beautiful sarsanet quilted cloaks, eighteen to twenty-one shillings; the very best superfine stuff coats that can be made, and lined to the top, ten shillings and sixpence." These prices seem to us very cheap, but most likely we do not understand the matter. Brown the Tailor, of Ludgate Street, charged four guineas for a full suit of superfine, with "garters complete," the said garters being important matters in the style of dress then adopted; a pair of silk knit breeches cost two pounds fifteen shillings. A young man advertised for a place with a single gentleman; that he understood dressing hair and looking after linen was proper enough; but it seemed to him an addition to his worth, that he could "blow the French horn." The ten or a dozen commas gave an unnecessary elaboration to the following advertisement:—"Left in a hackney coach, a cane, with a small gold head, H. M. in a cypher, the number forgot, but the coachman well-known, who took up two gentlemen at the foot of Westminster Bridge, on the Surrey side, and set them down at the second door in Old Bond Street, on Sunday evening, about six." An advertisement for a boy of sixteen who had eloped gives us an idea of the dress of a London boy a hundred years ago:—"His dress a cinnamon coloured coat and waistcoat, the coat pieced at the elbows; the buttons of the coat and waistcoat plate steel with

pinchbeck rims; his breeches leather; his stockings brown thread, and shoe-buckles silver-plated; his hat plain; his great-coat blue nap, double breasted, blue braiding, and horizontal pockets." Whether this smart fellow was a little out of the common, we have no clear means of judging. The believers in mysticism are not expected to be very clear; but the following advertisement appears to relate to the Elixir Vitæ of the alchemists and necrologists:—"Any one who is master of the hermetic wisdom of the ancient philosophers, and willing to communicate it to a faithful student, that favour shall be ever very carefully acknowledged by Eugenius Philalethes. Please to send your address, and direct it for A. O., to be left at Mrs. Mossmann's, No. 48, Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, and you shall be waited on." We do not find evidence that the hermetic wisdom ever reached the advertiser. More within the range of our present experience is an advertisement from the widow of a tradesman, who had fallen into trouble after forty years' attention to business. She "petitions the humane public to recommend her to take to nurse three or four children who can run about, where they will be sure of tender nursing, kept clean, and their bellies full of good wholesome victuals."

Concerning the topographical features of the metropolis, many bits of information enable us to compare the past with the present. Exactly a hundred years ago, Somerset House became what it has been ever since, a locality for government offices. "It is now resolved, and will shortly receive royal sanction, that Somerset House, in the Strand, which has always been considered part of the jointure of the Queen, shall be pulled down, and that the Stamp Office, the Navy Office, and Salt Office, with many other apartments for the service of Government, shall be erected on the ground. As a compensation to the Queen, Buckingham House is to be added to her jointure, and the King to be reimbursed from the Civil List the sum of twenty thousand pounds, which the Queen's palace cost his majesty." The exchange was a useful one, seeing that Somerset House had been of very little service to the Queen's Consort. Various streets, roads, &c., in the Marylebone region are named after a wealthy landowner, the Duke of Portland; but who can tell us anything about Portland-square

and its mud-pond? "Tuesday afternoon—a journeyman cabinet maker went into a little piece of water, in a field at the back of Portland-square, to bathe: he jumped in; but there being very little water, and a great quantity of mud, he was suffocated in a few minutes." Wych-street had its open-air performances of a kind somewhat different from those of the well-conducted little theatre since erected in that narrow locality. An Irish labourer annoyed and insulted a carman in Wych-street; he was always doing it, until the neighbours urged the carman to give him a thrashing once for all. A number of Irish assembled to encourage their champion. "In about twenty minutes the labourer received a very sound and complete drubbing, to the great satisfaction of several persons in the neighbourhood. The populace, who had learned the true story, hooted his companions for taking the part of an insolent, overbearing rascal." Of course, there were no police in those days; or, rather, there were no neatly-dressed, well-drilled men perambulating the streets day and night; "Charleys" guarded, or did not guard, the streets at night; while the Bow-street officers were a small body of men for special service. The police magistrates had ample means of knowing that all the various kinds of street thieves and house thieves were nimble and daring. They put an advertisement in the newspapers, cautioning the public against a prevalent mode of robbing houses. The thief "pretends to have business with the master; and, being told he is not at home, he goes into the parlour and sends the servant for pen, ink, and paper, in order to leave his business in writing; and while the servant is gone out, he takes an opportunity of pocketing anything that lies in his way, especially plate." How familiar we are with this dodge at the present day!

The Holborn Viaduct has recently cleared away a rookery which was long a terror to decent folks. The state of matters a century ago was adverted to by a correspondent of one of the newspapers thus—"An inhabitant of Snow-hill cautions all persons whom business or convenience obliges to go from Field-lane through Newgate, to have their wits about them, and to secure their pockets from a swarm of young pickpockets, who are easily distinguished by their shabby and dirty appearance. Three of them, about the age of fourteen, assume the habit of sailors,

without shirts or stockings, who solicit charity, and at the same instant steal your handkerchief."

We meet with little mention of the state of the City streets at that time, except to show that it was bad. A correspondent of one of the newspapers, evidently feeling the truth of what he said, stated that "many of the inhabitants of Philip-lane, London-wall, will be greatly obliged to the gentlemen commissioners to order the horse pavement in the lower part of the lane to be repaired, which is sunk down, and lies in a very bad condition, as most of the dirt from the upper part of the lane settles there, and which smells very much, and is a great nuisance, being taken away but once a week by the scavengers." The "gentlemen commissioners" were, we suppose, the City commissioners for lighting and paving. (We may just mention, en passant, that in this same Philip-lane may still be seen one of the few remaining bits of the real old wall of London.)

Among the corporate doings of the time was a contested election for sheriffs, carried on with a degree of fierceness far beyond our present experience. Thus the Morning Chronicle, thick-and-thin with one party, wrote thus—"Work away, Master Wilkes! Work away, Master Reynolds! Work away, Master Maskall! Abuse away, my masters, all of you, together! It will not do. Neither Mr. Plomer, nor Mr. Hart, nor their friends, will take the least notice. This, my masters, will serve for the present, that Plomer and Hart are men of character, and you see, my masters, that they are supported. Good-bye, Master Wilkes!" This was met by mingled banter and abuse on the other side; and the day after the election gave birth to the following:—"Tycho Brahe, optician, presents his compliments to the two present worthy sheriffs for the City of London, and, finding from their declaration at Guildhall, yesterday, that the minority was the majority, their eyesight is very defective, humbly craves the honour of serving them with spectacles."

There were more denizens of London then than there are now; that is, a greater number of persons who lived and slept in the City. This may easily be accounted for. At that time the whole area, about equal to one square mile, was occupied with narrow streets and lanes, lined on both sides with lofty houses, containing a large number of dwellers. There was not

room to squeeze in an additional house anywhere. Since those days vast changes have been made. Whole streets and blocks of dwelling-houses have been swept away, to make room for a new Bank of England, a new Royal Exchange, approaches to three new bridges, the formation of new streets and the widening of others, the digging down and building up of several railway stations, and a host of large structures for banks, insurance offices, post and telegraph offices, joint-stock companies' premises, hotels, and wholesale commercial warehouses. The dwellers in the City have lessened by many thousands; but many of the same families are there, the descendants of those who flourished and made comfortable fortunes a hundred years ago.

A newspaper tells us incidentally that the numbering of the houses of London was just about to be adopted a hundred years ago. Mr. Brush, the painter, had a dialogue with Mr. Cheshire, the cheese-monger, on the question whether houses ought to be numbered from right to left or from left to right. As we know, the postal authorities have, in recent years, settled this question by beginning at that end of a street which is nearest to the General Post Office, with the odd numbers on the left side and the even on the right.

Midsummer having arrived, a century ago, open air places of amusement put forth their attractions. Many readers will be surprised to hear that St. Helena Tea Gardens, over Bermondsey way, existed a hundred years ago; visitors were tempted with music, fireworks, &c. Marybone Gardens advertised a Comic Cantata by Dr. Arnold, on the subject of Don Quixote; the price of admission was three and sixpence. The attractions on another evening must be described in the veritable language of the exhibitor:—"Signor Torre will exhibit the Forge of Vulcan under Mount Etna, the Cave of the Cyclops, and the Flowing of the Lava. Which he will perform with his splendid museum, in which it was exhibited before the Court of France last year, at the marriage of H.R.H. the Count d'Artois. The additions to this representation consist principally of a battle between Mars and his attendant warriors against Vulcan and his Cyclops; Vulcan, stimulated by jealousy, exerts his utmost efforts, and after a furious contest, overtakes his antagonist in the Eruption of the Mountain." Generally speaking, the entertainments at Marybone Gardens began with an open-air

concert; doors open at five, performances commence at half-past six—about two hours earlier than our present custom at such places. "One of the most elegant tea rooms in the three kingdoms is now open for the reception of ladies and gentlemen, known by the name of Mile-end Assembly Rooms; and also a pleasing garden is preparing for the ladies to walk in, and also a bowling green for the diversion of gentlemen. N.B. Wedding and all other public dinners dressed on the shortest notice." A masked ball at the Pantheon must have been a very splendid and costly affair; for even admission from ten till four, for a few days afterwards, "to view the decorations," and hear some music, was charged five shillings. At the Devil Tavern, Fleet-street, an entertainment was given in the great room, "for the benefit of several distressed families;" and a surprising one it was. "Sieur Romain will sing and play in a large pair of spectacles and French bob-wig, and will likewise play on the violin in five different attitudes, and particularly with his foot. Accompanied by Sieur Coranso on the mandoline." The Italian Opera at the King's Theatre closed when the hot weather arrived (not our present custom). Drury Lane and Covent Garden were also shut up; and the "little theatre in the Haymarket," with Foote as the principal actor, was almost the only one open, where "Servants to keep places were requested to be at the house by five o'clock." A correspondent of one of the daily papers puts in a decided puff of one Miss Dawson, a singer at Sadler's Wells. "Her singing gave me infinite pleasure, and infinitely transcended the idea I had applied to a vocal performer at Sadler's Wells." He (or she) implied that the sooner an engagement was offered to Miss Dawson by the authorities of the Theatres Royal, so much the better for them.

Mr. Pinchbeck, an ingenious mechanic, who had an exhibition of curiosities in Cockspur-street, announced that, "as many persons have hinted that it was impossible at once seeing the exhibition to examine all its merits, every person who has once paid for seeing it, will be admitted again, as often as they please, gratis, if they come with other company that do pay." Not a bad decoy. One public amusement of those days we have had the grace to throw off, nearly if not quite. "At the Cockpit Royal, South side of St. James's Park, this day, a day's

play of cocks, for Five guineas a battle, and Seventy the odd, between the gentlemen of Essex and London." "To be fought near the Crown, Tothil-fields, this day, a match for Two guineas a battle, and Ten the odd, between the gentlemen of Westminster and London." "To be fought, a Main of Cocks, at the Pit, Pickled Egg Walk, for Five guineas a battle, and Fifty the odd, between the gentlemen of London and Middlesex." Cricket had not at that time become very famous as an English game; but we meet with one entry relating to it—"A match to be played between five picked gentlemen of Middlesex, against five of London, for Twenty guineas aside, on Monday next, in Marybone-fields," the veritable precursor, we believe, of Lord's Cricket Ground.

As we may well suppose, the facilities were few for getting to pleasant places a few miles from town. A run that can now be taken by rail or steamer for a shilling or two, was, at that time, an affair of a hired vehicle for half a day or a day. We are told incidentally that Kew Gardens were to be opened on Thursday the twenty-third of June, and Richmond Gardens on Sunday the twenty-sixth, by order of the king—quite a royal and special condescension. The Richmond Theatre was open by subscription, Brereton and Dibdin being among the stars engaged. Epsom Wells, opened on the fourth of July, and to continue open until Michaelmas "as for ages past," were devoted to drinking the waters and partaking of public breakfasts. The Epsom magnesia, popularly known as Epsom salts, was prepared from these waters for sale in London as a medicament. The mention of Epsom reminds us that between that town and Banstead, a hundred years ago, a fête champêtre, or garden-party of a singularly attractive kind was held. The Earl of Derby (of that day) had a lovely place there called the Oaks, and the fête champêtre of which we speak was held in honour of the betrothal of Lord Stanley, heir of the house, to a lady of the aristocratic Hamilton family. Twenty coaches were engaged to convey professionals from Grosvenor-square to the Oaks; of course the guests (three hundred in number) provided carriages of their own. The trees were festooned with flowers; music, songs, and village dances were in great variety. At supper, young girls, dressed as Circassians, waited on the company. The Druid of the Oaks

appeared, and spoke verses written in praise of Hymen, compliments to the noble families of Hamilton and Stanley, and invoking propitious Venus, while little cupids presented a bouquet to each of the ladies. The fashionable newspaper of the day said:—"Though the company were in general dressed with much propriety, the ladies and gentlemen who were singularly happy in the fancy of their habits were the Duke and Duchess of Grafton, the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, Lord and Lady Sefton, Lady Betty Hamilton (the avowed queen of the entertainment), Lady Hamilton Stanhope, Lady Warren, and the two Miss Jeffreys. The beauty of the ladies acquired, if possible, new charms from the pastoral simplicity of their appearance; and had Theocritus himself been a spectator of the scene, he would have confessed that the most delightful picture his imagination ever painted in the fields of Sicily were by no means to be compared with the real festivity at the Oaks on Thursday evening." Burgoyne's dramatic entertainment, called the Maid of the Oaks, was founded on this pastoral garden-party.

In many respects the records of a hundred years ago are not unlike those of our own time. Then, as now, mean people were to be met with. A journeyman scourer, in Salisbury-court, Fleet-street, had to clean a waistcoat belonging to a gentleman; he found a five hundred pound bank note in one of the pockets, and honestly restored it; his reward was—thanks. Young men called fops or dandies misconducted themselves in parks and public places much as fast gents do now; and were so wantonly rude as to deserve the thrashing which too seldom fell to their share. There were false rumours then as there are now. The king was to hold a review on Blackheath; five hundred vehicles and five thousand visitors went down thither from London; by noon it was found to be a hoax; the hungry people cleared out the Greenwich shops so completely, that a penny loaf at last sold for sixpence, and a small slice of ham for a shilling; while carts were sent off in all directions to make purchases. There were strikes then, as now. Most of the sugar-bakers struck on one particular day, on a question of wages, and held meetings on Tower-hill and other open spaces; the masters made an equitable arrangement next day, and the men returned to work. There were lovers of old china then, as there are now. A show-room for old

Derby and Chelsea porcelain was open in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, where connoisseurs were invited to inspect and purchase table and dessert services, tea and coffee services, vases, tripods, altars, jars, figures, and groups. There were Army and Navy Estimates then, as now; but let us look at the difference:—In 1774, Army Estimates one million nine hundred thousand pounds, Navy Estimates one million eight hundred thousand; in 1874, Army Estimates fourteen millions five hundred thousand, Navy Estimates ten millions two hundred thousand! Then, as now, Londoners complained of the high price of meat; but with much less reason, for the Leadenhall Market tariff told of beef at two shillings and twopence to two shillings and tenpence per stone, mutton two shillings and sixpence to two shillings and tenpence, veal two shillings to three shillings, lamb two shillings and tenpence to three shillings and fourpence—prices at which we can only marvel, and envy. The public, it appears, paid more highly for soap and candles than we do now; “Truth exclaims against the base practices of the tallow chandlers, who buy the best fat for threepence halfpenny, which, when manufactured, they sell for eightpence per lb.; the fat for soap they buy at a much cheaper rate, and sell at sixpence.” Quacks obtained testimonials then as now. “I, Thomas Reynolds, master of the ship *Mentor*, do hereby certify to all whom it may concern, that upon my late voyage from St. Kitt’s to Carolina, with negro slaves, several of them falling ill of fever, and some of them very dangerously so, I administered to them Dr. Norris’s Antimonial Drops, and they all perfectly recovered, without the aid of any other medicine whatever.” Then, as now, strange deaths supplied paragraphs to the newspapers; such as, “A child six years old, daughter of a wine cooper at East Smithfield, swallowed a stocking needle, and died.”—“Sampson, a journeyman silk dyer in Spitalfields, fell into a boiling vat of dye-liquor, and died.” Then, as now, debates were held at City taverns. At the Queen’s Arms, Newgate Street, the question was discussed: “Is it consistent with justice and reason, principles which ought ever to accompany the laws, that a complainant should be deprived by a judge of the right of trial of jury”—it bore, no doubt, on some subject of public interest at the time, but now forgotten. Traders then, as

now, competed by manoeuvres of a tricky kind; a coal merchant advertised that he would give thirty-nine bushels to the chaldron, instead of thirty-six, thereby enabling the public to save three shillings per chaldron—fudge, of course. Then, not as now, people often used pewter platters at dinner. “To be sold at the George, St. George’s in the Fields, a large quantity of dish and plate moulds for pewterers, the property of Mr. Thomas Mundy, pewterer.”

Of course it would be a great disgrace to us if we did not exhibit some advance on our forefathers of a hundred years ago, in matters of political and court morality. Bribery and “palm oil” are too strong as it is; but we do not now commonly meet with advertisements such as the following:—“A Hundred Guineas ready to be given to any lady or gentleman that has interest enough to procure a place at Court for a middle-aged man.”

AN ECLOGUE IN FINISTÈRE.

“HEAVENS, Easimayne! Can this be you? If so, I’m half in luck to-day, falling in with an approach to a civilised being.”

“Yes, Grombletone; ’tis I myself. Ipsissimus. Delighted to have the pleasure, though unexpected. And as *Deus nobis hæc otia fecit* and the break-up of the London season has given us a holiday, take a seat beside me. Be my Tityrus and we’ll hold discourse, although there’s no beechen shade to offer you. But I have chosen the softest block of granite, on the greenest grass slope, sheltered from the wind, in view of the strangest group of islets, and you can tell me what brings you to the Land’s-End of France. Are you come to write a sonnet on What the Wild Waves are saying, or to enlighten antiquaries with a Paper on the Domestic Arrangements of the Druids, from observations noted on the spot?”

“Tityrus! Schoolboy stuff and nonsense, sir. None of your Tityruses, sir, for me. My name is plain John Grombletone, as you should know very well, by this time, sir.” He calls everybody “Sir” when he isn’t quite pleased, which happens pretty frequently, occasionally rattling the final letter. He once called the mistress of a boarding house “Sir,” but she taught him not to repeat the error. “I come from Roscoff, Mr. Easimayne.”

“And I from Brest. I am waiting here for a boat to ferry me over to the *Ile de*

Melon, opposite. It was once a sanctuary for Druidesses. On it, in front of us, you see a Menhir, looking like a gigantic grave-stone planted there, to mark the tomb of a departed religion. A seat in my boat is at your service. You, too, must have passed through Brest."

"But did not stop there."

"Pity! Brest has much to interest and please. In the first place, which greatly concerns the traveller, there is at least one comfortable, liberal, and obliging hotel. Such dejeuners, with prawns, and periwinkles, with omelettes and lobsters, chops and steaks! Such dinners, such excellent Bordeaux wine at discretion—"

"Only a trap, sir, into overloading your stomach, and laying you up in the house for a fortnight."

"My stomach doesn't object to such overloading. A solid meal is a good preparation for a five hours' journey by rail or diligence."

"You call 'diligences' the things that rumble out of Brest!" growls Grombletone, all the more firmly because partly in the right. "Diligences, sir, are long since dead, and these are only their wandering corpses, whose bones come through their skin in fifty places. They are in the final stage of decrepitude; the noise they make is the true death-rattle. Their guard has bid adieu to worldly vanity, and sold his horn to a charlatan dentist. Their cushions have yielded so much that they can yield no more. Their whole inside is glazed and polished by the contact of bygone generations. The very prices of places are leaky. Just before starting, the first-come pilgrim to any Breton shrine can haggle successfully for a reduction of the fare. Your fellow-passengers—"

"Will not be such pleasant company as yourself, assuredly. But the diligence, permit me to remind you, Grombletone, has carried you away from the hotel question. Now it is always a good sign, I hold, when they give you at an inn a full-sized basin on your washhand-stand. It is an encouraging symptom of excellent entertainment when the prices asked are moderate. At hotels, 'cheap and nasty,' is not universally the rule. On the contrary, experience shows 'dear and bad, reasonable and good,' to be frequently true. It is so there, at the Hôtel de la Bourse. The look-out is on the peaceful Champ de Bataille, with its loungers and strollers, and music twice a week."

"What signifies the look-out, sir? It

doesn't make the bed-rooms bigger, nor improve the cookery."

"The look-in, then," continued Easimayne, not heeding the interruption, "is a tidy chamber and a well-furnished table, with more to eat and drink than is good for some people. It sours their tempers, however naturally sweet. So you did well, after all, not to stop in Brest."

"You are wrong, sir, for once. I ought to have tried it and judged for myself. I don't want to paint things in Brittany blacker than they are. That is quite unnecessary. I left Roscoff thinking to better myself; but I have gone further, and fared—"

"Worse?"

"Not better, certainly. Roscoff has its merits. A lobster or a crawfish—alive, sir, and therefore fresh—is always to be had from the famous fishpond at the foot of the little chapel of Sainte Barbe. Why, it occasionally has as many as forty thousand crustaceans, of one sort or another, at a time. The shell-fish trade is very considerable. There is a telegraphic wire for the reception of wholesale orders—"

"And for the sending off the live lobsters ordered?"

"Your joke, sir, is too stale to be enduring. They talk of making a railway for the purpose, and then Roscoff's fortune will be made; for the quantity of vegetables grown there is enormous."

"You can always have a salad, then, to eat with your lobster."

"Exactly. They export artichokes, cauliflowers, and so on, not only to Paris but to Holland and England. Altogether (in spite of the universal rise in prices) living is anything but dear—quite different to the Parisian tariff. Fish, meat, pretty flowers—camellias in quantity—and first-rate vegetables, are relatively cheap. There is a capital fish they call 'prêtres,' priests. I should never have fancied so devout a people would eat their clergy, even metaphorically. A decent sort of cake goes by the name of 'fass;' but every town in Europe, sir, has a cake of its own, which claims to be the best of all cakes in the world. At the hotel, I could live well for five francs a day, everything included, which is not extravagant—not the price of a meal in hundreds of inns in hundreds of places. The beach has a variety of attractions for those who can find any amusement on beaches. There are enormous rocks, but easy to climb, sands as fine and dry as spoilt children

could wish for, shingle and pebbles if wanted to throw at each other's pretty faces, and heaps of little shells—canary-yellow, lilac, pearl-grey, white—to fill their little pockets (all known to native conchologists as 'bigarnes') with seaweeds in such plenty as to defy scientific ladies to stick them all on paper. At low water, the rocks look like half-drowned bears."

"Did you bathe there? I can conceive the mistake."

"Sometimes. The fucuses cover them with a shaggy brown hide. When your eye catches them in line, you might take them for a sea-serpent cast ashore. No, sir; though you think me hard to please, I grant the place is picturesque enough, and is what they call 'plein d'avenir,' in the way of improvement one of these days, and with a fair prospect of future prosperity."

"Why did you leave it, then, in such a hurry?"

"Because, sir, at my time of life, I want a watering-place with present rather than future comforts. Why, sir, all the moisture in Brittany seems to have betaken itself into the Roscoff houses. The very best built are dripping wet. In all weathers, damp is standing on the walls, in the passages, and the entrances, which latter have mostly only earthen floors, instead of being paved or boarded. The only way to be comfortably lodged is to build a house for yourself. Many lovers of the Roscovite coast, of Paimpol and that neighbourhood, build their own houses, of dimensions and with outbuildings in accordance with the length of their purses. But do you suppose, sir, that I came to Brittany to build?"

"Hardly, in such a climate."

"Don't calumniate the climate, sir. If it were so bad as you imply, the gardens wouldn't be so fertile and flourishing. You should see the famous phenomenal fig tree—extraordinary but monstrously ugly—propped on I don't know how many stone stilts (fifty granite pillars Alexandre Dumas calls them, but he was only a romancer) to keep its enormous and distorted branches from breaking off and falling to the ground. A hundred and fifty people can take shelter beneath it. Mr. Thoms himself wouldn't dare to dispute its more than centenarianism. You are aware, sir—at least you ought to be—that fig trees are tests of the mildness of climate. Frost is never severe at Roscoff, and while I stayed there I had not

a single day's rain. But you, I perceive, are all for Brest and these parts, where they are so used to rain that they can't live without it. A fortnight's dry weather sets them praying and marching in procession, to bring down water from the skies. The earth is as thirsty as the population. Yesterday's showers are as completely gone as if they hadn't fallen at all."

"Come back with me to Roscoff, then, for the rest of the summer. I shall be glad of such an amiable guide to the lions."

"No, I thank you. Not this summer. I want to go where I can understand, and be understood. At Roscoff, although everybody is supposed to know French, nobody speaks anything but Breton, Breton too of the purest water, the Welshman's language, so slightly degenerated in transmission from father to son, that Taffy himself, arriving there, might ask for a rabbit to toast or a goat to ride on, and get them both immediately. The French is merely supposititious. I took a fellow to show the way to the Roscoff dolmen, and he didn't understand a syllable of what I said, except that one word 'dolmen.' The mistress of the hotel, although from Carhaix (in Finistère also, once the capital of the kingdom of Cornouaille, in France, not of Cornwall in England) spoke French only as she had been taught at school; but she very wisely learnt Breton, because the neighbours would have called her proud if she could not 'bretonner' a little. The very dogs have outlandish names; Robina, Farina, Courtaud, Pingouin. Our landlady's sister, Mademoiselle Pauline, called her cat Minettick, which I pronounce but would not undertake to spell. The map of Finistère is covered with Plous and Kers, Plou meaning a place of some sort: Plou-gastel, Plou-dalmézeau; descriptions not over clear to us. Ker, standing for a village or town, enjoys the same preponderance. In the Index to the Guides to Brittany, the letter K heads nothing but a regiment of Kers."

"You mean to say that Brittany is currish?"

"Sir! I thought we were talking seriously. The French call Finistère 'la Bretagne bretonnante,' 'bretonning Brittany,' the land of aborigines and autochthones, full of 'old rock' families, chips of the old block, as we might call them. Saint Pol-de-Léon, the nearest town to Roscoff, is the Faubourg Saint Germain, the Belgravia of Finistère, a mass-hearing

and aristocratic town, if ever there was one: handsome cathedral in perfect preservation, churches, convents, religious houses. When you first catch sight of it, Saint Pol looks charming."

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view."

"You are right, Mr. Easimayne, for once. Those who know it, style it a dull and gloomy hole. No doubt it is. The same of Morlaix, which, seen from the railway, is a gem that might ornament an artist's sketch-book; whereas, I was ordered to repress all admiration, the rule being to call it detestable. The same of the towns of Lamballe and Guingamp (whence our English gingham). You pass them, think them pretty, and don't enter them—the wisest thing you can do. You get from Morlaix to Roscoff in an old rumble-tumble fourwheel, which tests the strength of your bones for three long hours. Between Morlaix and Saint Pol is the village of Penzé, into which the sea, at high water, penetrates, bringing with it flocks of gulls who fish for small fry and search the mud for worms when the tide is out. I saw there a tremendous horse-fair; wild unbroken colts by hundreds and thousands."

"Are you sure of your figures, Grombletone? There is another fair held there you did not see, La Foire des Mariages, the Marriage Fair. On Michaelmas Day, the marriageable young women, who have portions to back them, assemble in all their finery, and take their seats, smart and smiling, in a double row on the parapet on each side of the bridge. The young men gravely walk between them. If a gallant feels that his heart has been touched, he offers his hand to the demoiselle, to help her down from the parapet. They talk business; the parents arrive, and the bargain is struck. Perhaps, however, the Bridge of Penzé may only ratify previous understandings."

"What a Bridge of Sighs!" exclaimed Grombletone, relaxing, but instantly resuming his gravity. "In front of Roscoff, Mr. Easimayne, is the Ile de Batz, which they pronounce Ba."

"Because the island rears large flocks of sheep?"

"Sir-r, your levity is—incurable. At low water, at rare intervals, you can reach it from Roscoff on foot, though I wouldn't answer for your getting there dry-shod. The inhabitants, there, speak Breton, and nothing else. I travelled from Morlaix to

Roscoff with three ladies of the Isle of Batz. You know all the ladies there do what Adam did, and Eve didn't; they delve in the gardens and till the fields, spinning, perhaps, in the long winter evenings. The gentlemen all go to sea, fishing, or manning the National Navy. I did my utmost to be agreeable to them."

"I should like to have seen that."

"I tried to engage them in conversation. I addressed them in my best diplomatic French; but the only reply I could get from them was 'Ile de Bà! Ile de Bà!' Nevertheless, some at least of the Roscovites are not restricted to their mother tongue. When I refused the street boys who pestered me with 'Un petit sou, Monsieur; un petit sou!' they called me names, sir, most horrible names, in as good gutter English as you would hear in Portsmouth or Wapping."

"That was nothing; they abused you, and left you to go your way in peace. You would have been worse off in the Morbihan, where children mob you, while the mothers stand grinning at the open doors. The drive from Auray to Carnac is wearisome enough, with little besides the short squat windmills to break the monotony of the wild barren heaths, which they call 'landes,' though they are different from the landes of the Gironde."

"'Tis the nature of the country, sir, and the nature of the people. Savagery and neglect are their leading features; ravines, capricious brooks, uncultivated plains, covered with heath and yellow-flowered furze and broom, which they think the most beautiful of blossoms. They cut it for fuel every three or four years at oftenest, and would think themselves ruined if the progress of agriculture were to supplant it with flourishing crops of corn."

"To get to the lines of stones at Carnac (you know what Murray says about them) I had to pass through a hamlet of half-a-dozen cottages. Out popped a young gentleman, hat in hand, saying, with a graceful bow, 'Bonjour, Monsieur.' 'Bonjour, mon ami,' said I. Arrived at the stones, I ruminated, 'What can these be? The fossil skeleton of a building, whose bones and vertebrae have been thrown to the ground, dispersed and worn by time and storms, split, broken, disjointed, weather-beaten'—'Un petit sou, Monsieur, pour des sabots!'—I turned. The imp had followed me, reinforced by a little army of girls. 'Un petit sou!' was now a chorus, instead of a single cry. I turned

a deaf ear, went further on, and proceeded with my meditations. 'If the stones of Carnac disappoint by their comparative inferiority of size, they astonish by their number, by their aspect of extremest antiquity (common to all Druidical monuments) and by the regularity of their arrangements. If they and others in their neighbourhood, instead of forming parallel lines, were placed as they now stand in one single row, they would make miles of stones, stuck in the ground for some unknown purpose.' Again 'Un petit sou, pour des sabots!' was shrieked in my ear, no longer with any pretence of a request, but with the mocking laugh of determined annoyance. I gave it up, and beat a retreat. They followed, as a crowd follows a mad dog whom they dare not approach too near, and won't lose sight of. Near the dolmens thereabouts, children lie in ambush, starting up to worry you as soon as you arrive. At some places of interest, especially those commanding a view, bigger lads await the approach of tourists, not at all to beg, but simply to dog you, and stare, and show by their looks what a strange animal they think you."

"And you didn't pull the young wretches' ears! Elsewhere, the beggars are at least both picturesque and communicative, besides giving you something in return for your money. At Penzé, there was a fellow who might sit for his picture, the very thing for a wood-cut, who, when I gave him a sou or two, repeated a Paternoster and an Ave Maria, from beginning to end, in excellent Latin, not on his own account, but on mine. Similar strange types hung about the hotel at Roscoff—Bernicotte and her two sons, commissionaires; Janik or Jeannie the fisherman's wife; and there was an old widow who said a *De Profundis* every time I bestowed a trifle on her, 'pour les votres,' she added, meaning for my deceased relations. I was told that at the famous pilgrimage of Sainte Anne d'Auray, beggars will crawl completely round the church on their knees, giving you the choice whether the penitential act shall be carried to your own account, or that of your departed parents. And they do it cheaply enough, being perfectly satisfied with three or four sous."

"In truth, the Bretons seem to take a pleasure in saying their prayers on all occasions. I believe them to be sincere and that their devotion is not hypocrisy, though it may more than approach superstition."

"You are right, as to that. The maid at the Roscoff hotel was made completely happy by a bottle of water from the well of St. Geneviève (the patroness of Paris) at Nanterre—where the Saint was born—which a lady gave her."

"Happy maid! to be so easily pleased. But here comes my boat. Let us go and take a peep at the monuments left in the Druidesses's home. What's your opinion of them, Grombletone? What do you say that dolmens, menhirs, and stone avenues were? Astronomical, sacrificial, ceremonial, or sepulchral? When were they erected? Before the Flood (which is indefinite now-o'-days) or, as many believe, before the severance of Great Britain from France, by the English Channel? And by whom? I had long ago a fancy that they are not the remains of human workmanship. Man is not the only animal endowed with the bump of constructiveness. Might not an extinct race of house-building monsters be just as likely as the Druids to have put those queer big stones in place? What do you say to it, Grombletone?"

"I say I know nothing about it, sir, and I'm quite sure you don't either, sir, whatever knowledge you may pretend to, sir-r-r. I accept your offer, nevertheless. Do you think he can row us over without spilling? And, I say, Easimayne, have you got any luncheon on board? The air is keen. I could eat a few prawns, or a lobster, with bread-and-butter—the fare of the country—or a joint of cold mutton, and be satisfied with ordinary Bordeaux wine, or even a pint of bottled Brest beer. You have something? Eh?"

SAFELY MARRIED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AN EXPERIENCE," "DAISY'S TRIALS," &c., &c.

CHAPTER V.

It was quite a shock to me, though I was an old fool to feel it so, to have Elsie come down that morning dressed with most delicate care and daintiness, and looking a very Aurora of fresh brightness. If she really had cried the night before, which I began to doubt, she showed no more sign of it than the rose shows of the past presence of the drop of dew, or of rain, which the morning wind has shaken off into the sunshine. But I, by-and-by, felt sure that she was not as gay and careless as she tried to seem. The question—"Where is Allan?"—which she would not

speak, was in her eyes and in every gesture. Through her light chatter, as we sat at breakfast, I felt her pre-occupation and watchfulness. To that light chatter she found me irresponsive; she found me unsympathetic with her raptures about the beauty of the morning, fair-shining after yesterday's rain; found me, indeed, altogether grim, glum, grave, and unpleasant. And, by-and-by, suddenly jumping up from her place, she came to my side, putting her hands on my shoulders, she shook me, kissing me at the same time, and said—

"Aunt Hammond, do you and Allan want to drive me into doing—I don't know what, but something very desperate? I'm not going to put up with nothing but cross words and gloomy looks; with having nothing done to amuse me, and no one taking any notice of me. I warn you that I don't mean to bear this sort of treatment, and you may warn my husband! Why should he have changed so to me? I am not changed; I am not different. What have I done to deserve that he should treat me so?"

She spoke tremulously, and her eyes were stung to tears.

She stepped from the window on to the lawn, and stood there for five minutes quite still. The pretty creature! all bloom and light and loveliness. Neither cold nor heat, frost nor sunshine, ever seemed to have any power to redden or to roughen that skin of Elfie's, or in any way to harm her fatal beauty.

When she came in she stood in front of me and spoke quite solemnly—for Elfie—her earnestness dilating and darkening her violet eyes till they might have passed for black.

"I'm nineteen," she began. "I may live to be ninety. Some people do. I am sure I shall never wish to die. How can any one ever wish to die? It must be horrid—hateful. I want to be happy up in the sunshine." She was gazing towards Braithwait now. "We have been married eight months—only eight months. What will it be when we have been married eight—eighteen—eight-and-twenty years, if we go on like this?"

"If you often play the fool, the wicked little fool, as you did last night, Elfie, long before your eight-and-twenty, eighteen, or even eight years are out, the whole thing will have come to some most miserable end."

"What whole thing will have come to some most miserable end?" she asked with

a curdling pallor at the very ring of such ominous, uncomfortable-sounding words.

"Your marriage."

"I know I did not behave well last night, Aunt Hammond. I meant to have asked Allan to forgive me. I meant to have explained to him some things—some things about Edgar Ramsay—some things you don't know, Aunt Hammond. For indeed," and here she sparkled and flushed proudly, "I do not mean to have him, Edgar Ramsay, fancying that he has me in his power, because of some—some foolishness, because of a half-promise, because of just two silly little letters. I meant to have told everything to Allan."

"Do that, Elfie, and you will do the wisest thing it has ever entered into your head to contemplate. Do it, Elfie, and you will save yourself from the possibility of evils you cannot even imagine."

"Allan gives me no opportunity of doing it, Aunt Hammond; I was waiting and watching for him last night, and he did not come near me."

"Can you wonder he did not come near you! Why, Elfie, your whole behaviour last evening was so studiously insulting that—well, far less provocation than you gave has made murderers of men no worse than other men—nay, perhaps, in many things better, with keener sensitiveness of honour and feeling, only weaker in having less self-control."

"What are you talking about? What absurd exaggeration! I wished to punish Allan for having left me to myself the whole long dismal day. I wished to please Edgar Ramsay. I wished to amuse myself. That is all!"

"Are you a baby, Elfie? Or are you a woman without a heart?"

Elfie raised her fairy-pencilled brows, and looked at me with the "daft" look she had sometimes. Whether she assumed it, or whether at times it settled naturally down upon her face, I never had been able to decide.

I wished to try an experiment, one that I don't think now I was justified in trying.

"Kneel down by me, child," I said, "so that I may speak softly close into your ear." She obeyed me, with an air half of mockery, half of wonder.

"Elfie, have you any thought of what will be the natural consequence of teaching your husband to believe either that he has married a pretty doll, without heart or conscience, or a vain unprincipled girl, who gives what heart she has elsewhere?"

Allan has a large, and a very loving nature, Elfie—see how tender he is even to an ugly old woman! Such things as husbands unfaithful to wives as young and as lovely as you are, Elfie, have been and will be. Your husband, had he not—and this is the one folly and weakness I have found in him, Elfie—set his heart on you, you pretty doll, and chosen to believe you were as beautiful within as without; if he hadn't done this, Elfie, he might have won for himself the devoted love of a noble young woman, who would have been for him a real companion, who would have helped on all the work of his life—who—but I mustn't speak more of her, Elfie. Only, I would just warn you, that he may now remember and understand what his singular freedom from vanity and conceit, and his illusions about you, child, hindered him from understanding before. He may now—to the misery of us all—remembering and understanding, contrast the wife he has with the wife he might have had, and——”

Elfie jumped up. Her eyes had taken fire, and her cheeks burnt with a rose-coloured flame.

“I know what you mean! Whom you mean!” she said. “Angela!”—a pause. I felt frightened at what I had done; but soon Mistress Elfie broke out into a light secure laugh.

“You cannot make me jealous, Aunt Hammond,” she said in her emptiest, vainest manner. “I know too well that from anyone, at any time, I could win back my husband when I chose. To show you that you cannot make me jealous, I have a great mind to have Angela to stay with me! I jealous! knowing as I do, that from anyone, at any time, I could win Allan back to me!”

“How long will it continue to be so, child? Your husband is not the kind of man to remain subject to your physical beauty, if you teach him to believe in your spiritual ugliness.”

The flush of rose-coloured flame passing away, had left Elfie paler than usual.

“You have talked me into a very bad head-ache, again,” she said, putting her two hands together on the top of her head. “Am I always to be having head-aches now?” she asked querulously. “I never used to have a pain anywhere. But, somehow, life is getting so serious. I do not like the change. I wish—I do wish—that I had never married. I'll go and lie down and think about Angela,

Aunt Hammond. Poor Allan So, you think that, but for me, he would have been happy with Angela, and that he is not happy now—that he is disappointed in his wished-for doll and plaything? Poor Allan! He does not certainly seem happy.” As she so said, surely her Psyche gave one wistful look out from her eyes.

“It is only you who can now make him happy, Elfie. It is only you he loves. If you can be good and loving, he will be happy.”

The girl looked really suffering. I went with her to her room, darkened it for her, and saw her nestle down into her pillow, closing her lids. When I had left her some hours alone, I went to look at her. She was not asleep; but she would not speak, only, by shaking her head, refused anything I offered her, either of food or of medicine.

When Mr. Braithwait at last, late in the afternoon, came home, I had almost succeeded—so great a power had Elfie over me—in forgetting a good deal of her naughtiness, because of her suffering loveliness, and in thinking of her husband as somewhat harshly neglectful. I made the most of her suffering when speaking to him, also telling him that she had cried herself to sleep last night after laying awake for hours watching for him, and wishing to ask to be forgiven.

“Is she asleep now?” he asked; and that was all he said.

“Asleep or not, you had better go to her.”

He went directly; and all the time they were together—and it was a long time—I felt terribly nervous. When, by-and-by, he came down and asked for a cup of tea for Elfie, his face puzzled me. There was some light of some sort come into it, some hope, or joy, or peace; but it was, nevertheless, intensely, unutterably sad. No, I don't know that it was sad. I don't know how to describe what it was; but, after meeting his eyes, a great lump came into my throat, of which I had to get rid before I could order the tea he asked for.

“Let it be brought here, please, Aunt Hammond. I will take it up myself.” Then he added, when Hannah had left the room—

“My poor darling has been crying so much, I don't want Hannah to see her.”

“Crying is a new accomplishment to Elfie,” I remarked. “I don't think tears come easily to her. They cost her more than they do most young things. I hope, therefore, they may mean more.”

Stooping over me, as if to examine my knitting, he said,

"She has told me everything. She has shown me the prettiest, completest penitence. What a child she is in some ways! How much more innocent than seemed possible was her last evening's naughtiness. I have judged her very harshly. I feel as if I had just come out of a horrid nightmare into the waking, daylight world. Not too bright a world, by any means. But," and here his voice grew solemn, "thank Heaven, I see my way clear before me now, I think. Having made Elsie my wife, it seems to me that, for the present, the duty nearest me is to sacrifice everything to the one effort, the one object, of guarding this lovely child from evil, leading her towards good, acting as her conscience till she comes into conscience of her own, as far as may be in my power keeping her happy and unharmed."

His tone, as he ended, was inexpressibly touching, at least I felt it so; but it was not dreary. He spoke as one strung up to a high pitch of self-sacrificing resolve, and in whom hope was not yet dead, was hardly enfeebled.

When he left me, carrying his cup of tea upstairs, somewhat awkwardly, I must confess, for he was not used to carpet service, I just had a good cry at the pity of it. This poor young fellow, not yet five-and-twenty, and full of aims and hopes for useful work in the world, felt life crippled and clogged by the wife who would be neither help nor companion, but a ceaseless anxiety, a secret danger, needing unrelaxing vigilance of watch!

And was this my work? Could I have hindered it? Had I not warned him plainly enough? And how could I know? Neither did I know whether Elsie were but an immature, undeveloped creature in whom soul, and heart, and conscience might yet wake—whether she were this, and only this, or worse?

When, a few days later, they left my cottage for their own home, the new peace between them had not been broken. Elsie had behaved very "prettily." Allan had been only too studiously observant and indulgent.

They both seemed to feel the parting with me. Elsie, least, because she loved both luxury and novelty, and Braithwait Manor promised both. My cottage, which indeed was just on the outskirts of the Braithwait estate, was only a moderate

drive from their home: so, of course, we looked to see each other often—at least through the long summer days. It was not like a separation in which distance played part.

I took an opportunity of asking Allan before he left if he meant to let Edgar Ramsay visit at Braithwait, when Edgar was in the neighbourhood.

"I don't see how I can help myself," he answered, gloomily, to add, more brightly—"And now Elsie has given me her confidence, I don't see what harm he can do. I am placed in a most awkward position with regard to him. He is my first cousin—he is poor, while I am rich."

"Settle money on him."

"He declines to have that done. He prefers to have indefinite claims."

"That I can fancy!"

"He has always had the run of Braithwait when he has chosen, the use of its stables and kennels. It would look like churlish tyranny to refuse him these. I don't like him. I don't trust him. But I know no particular evil of him. What can I do, Aunt Hammond? What reason could I give for forbidding him my house? I can hardly afford to make him my open enemy, knowing too well in what manner his enmity would be shown."

"Use all your influence to get him some good appointment abroad again."

"That I have done, and am doing. But he is difficult to please, now that, unfortunately, he knows I want him gone."

I thought, with an inward groan, that when a man's enemies, or at least those who imperil his peace, are they of his own household, hardly shall he be delivered out of their hand. But I hastened to say—

"Don't understand my question to mean anything more than that distrust you share with me of Edgar Ramsay—who, to my mind, is an idle unprincipled fellow, delighting in treachery and mischief for their own sakes, and with a grudge and a spite against you and Elsie!"

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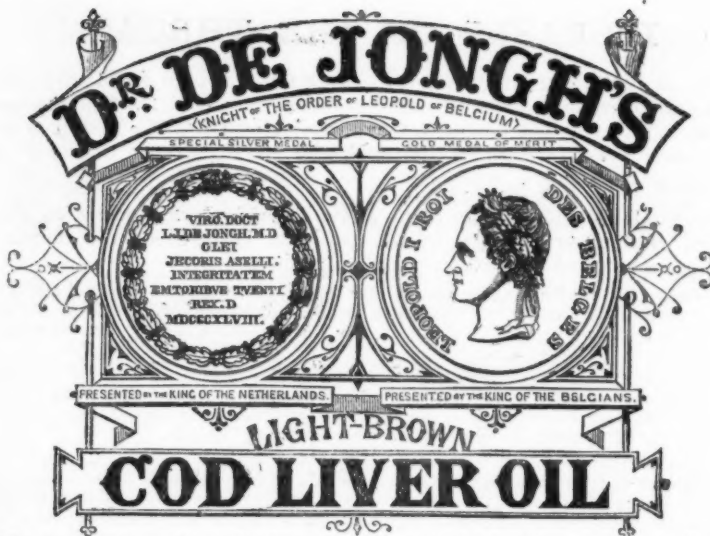
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